

AUDITION PACKET For ALL MY SONS by Arthur Miller

Bill Bottomly, Director (970)901-9079; John Lange, Assistant Director, (970)615-0022

Auditions: Sunday, March 24, & Monday, March 25, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at Magic Circle Theatre, 420 S 12th St, Montrose, CO 81401 <https://magiccircleplayers.com>

ALL MY SONS opens Friday, September 13, 2024, and runs for the next 3 weekends; 2 Matinees on September 15 & 22, 2024. We plan to rehearse on Tuesdays and Thursdays in June and July, starting June 4, 2024. Beginning August 4, 2024, we will add Sunday evening rehearsals. We will rehearse each night September 8-11, 2024. Note: The character "Bert" in the original script, is not included in this production. A pdf file of the complete script can be downloaded at

<https://frielingretc.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/all-my-sons-script.pdf>

Synopsis [For more information, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_My_Sons]

Act I

In August 1946, Joe Keller, a self-made businessman (at one time in business with Steve Deever), and his wife Kate are visited by a neighbor, Frank. At Kate's request, Frank is trying to figure out the horoscope of the Kellers' missing son Larry, who disappeared in 1943 while serving in the military during World War II. There has been a storm and the tree planted in Larry's honor has blown down during the month of his birth, strengthening Kate's belief that Larry is coming back, while Joe and Chris, the Kellers' other son, believe differently. Furthermore, Chris wishes to propose to Ann Deever, who was Larry's girlfriend at the time he went missing and who has been corresponding with Chris for two years. Joe and Kate react to this news with shock. When Ann arrives, it is revealed that her father, Steve Deever, is in prison for selling cracked cylinder heads to the Air Force, causing the deaths of twenty-one pilots in 1943. Joe was his partner but was exonerated of the crime. Ann admits that neither she nor her brother are in touch with their father anymore. After a heated argument, Chris proposes alone to Ann, who accepts. Chris also reveals that he has survivor's guilt from losing all his men in a company he led. Meanwhile, Joe receives a phone call from George, Ann's brother, who is coming there to settle something.

Act II

Chris avoids telling his mother about his engagement with Ann. Their next-door neighbor Sue emerges and reveals to Ann that everyone on the block thinks Joe is equally guilty of the crime of supplying faulty aircraft engines. Shortly afterward, George Deever arrives and reveals that he has just visited the prison to see his father, Steve. The latter claimed that Joe told him by phone to "weld up and paint over" the cracked cylinders and send them out, and later gave a false promise that Joe would take the blame. George insists his sister Ann cannot marry Chris Keller, the son of the man who destroyed the Deevers. Frank reveals his horoscope, which implies that Larry is alive, to Kate's pleasure. Joe maintains that he was bedridden with the flu on the fateful day of dispatch. They manage to settle George, but Kate lets slip that Joe has not been sick in fifteen years. Despite George's protests, Chris and Ann send him away.

After Kate claims to Joe and Chris that moving on from Larry would reveal Joe as a murderer, Chris concludes that George was right. Joe, out of excuses, confesses that he sent out the cracked airheads to avoid closure of the business, intending to notify the military later that they needed repairs. However, when the airplanes

crashed and made headlines, Joe lied to Steve, cast all blame on him and abandoned him to be arrested. Joe and Steve went to prison, but Joe was later exonerated. Chris cannot accept his explanation that it was done for the family and exclaims in despair that he doesn't know what to do about his father.

Act III. (Will be combined with Act II)

Chris has left home. That night Kate advises Joe to express willingness to go to prison and make Chris relent, should he return. As he only sought to make money for his family, Joe is adamant that their relationship is above the law. Soon after, Ann emerges and expresses her intention to leave with Chris regardless of Kate's disdain. When Kate angrily refuses again, Ann sends Joe in the house and reluctantly provides Kate with a letter from Larry that says he intends to commit suicide because of shame for what his father did. Chris returns and remains torn on whether to turn Joe over to the authorities, knowing it doesn't erase the death of his fellow soldiers or absolve the world of its natural merciless state.

Joe returns and excuses his guilt on account of the abundance of profiteers in the world. Chris wearily responds that he knew but believed that Joe was better than the others. Ann takes the letter and provides it to Chris while Kate desperately tries to push Joe away. Chris reads the letter to Joe out loud. It implies that Larry committed suicide because of his father's guilt. Joe agrees to turn himself in. He goes inside to get his coat. A gunshot is heard off-stage. The play ends with Chris, in tears, being consoled by Kate to not take Joe's death on himself.

Timeline

The precise dates of events in the play are unclear. However it is possible to construct a timeline of *All My Sons* using the dialogue. The action takes place in August 1946 or 1947, in middle America, with the main story taking place on a Sunday morning.

- Autumn 1943: Joe encourages Steve to supply the USAAF with faulty cylinder heads for aircraft engines
- Autumn 1943: After 21 pilots crash, Joe and Steve are arrested
- November 25, 1943: Having read about his father's arrest in newspapers received overseas, Larry sends the suicide letter to Kate and allegedly crashes his plane off the coast of China
- 1944: Joe is exonerated and released from prison
- August 1946 - 1947, a Sunday morning when the play begins

CAST DESCRIPTIONS

(ages are approximate)

Joe Keller — Joe, 60, was exonerated after being charged with knowingly shipping from his factory defective aircraft engine cylinder heads (for Curtiss P-40 fighters) during World War II, becoming (in his own words) "the guy who made 21 P-40s crash in Australia". For over three years he has placed the blame on his partner and former neighbor, Steve Deever, although he himself committed the crime. When the truth comes out, Joe justifies his actions by claiming that he did it for his family.

Kate Keller (Mother) — Kate, 50, knows that Joe is guilty but lives in denial while mourning for her younger son Larry, who has been "missing in action" for three years. She refuses to believe that Larry is dead and maintains that Ann Deever — who returns for a visit at the request of Larry's brother Chris — is still "Larry's girl" and also believes that he is coming back.

Chris Keller — Chris, 32, returned home from World War II two years before the play begins, disturbed by the realization that the world was continuing as if nothing had happened. He has summoned Ann Deever to the Keller house in order to ask her hand in marriage, but they're faced with the obstacle of Kate's unreasonable conviction that Larry will someday return. Chris idolizes his father, not knowing initially what he has done.

Ann Deever — Ann, 26, arrives at the Keller home having shunned her "guilty" father since his imprisonment. Throughout the play, Ann is often referred to as pretty, beautiful, and intelligent-looking and as "Annie". She had a relationship with Larry Keller before his disappearance and has since moved on because she knows the truth of his fate. She hopes that the Kellers will consent to her marriage to Larry's brother, Chris, with whom she has had corresponded by mail for two years. Ann is the truth-bearer in the play.

George Deever — George, 31, is Ann's older brother: a successful New York lawyer, WWII veteran, and a childhood friend of Chris's. He initially believed in his father's guilt, but upon visiting Steve in jail, realizes his innocence and becomes enraged at the Kellers for deceiving him. He returns to save his sister from her marriage to Chris, creating the catalyzing final events.

Dr. Jim Bayliss — Jim, 40, neighbor of Kellers, is a successful doctor, but is frustrated with the stifling domesticity of his life. He wants to become a medical researcher, but continues in his job as it pays the bills. He is a close friend to the Keller family and spends a lot of time in their backyard.

Sue Bayliss — Sue, 40, is Jim's wife: needling and dangerous, but affectionate. She too is a friend of the Keller family, but is secretly resentful of what she sees as Chris's bad idealistic influence on Jim. Sue confronts Ann about her resentment of Chris in a particularly volatile scene.

Frank Lubey — Frank, 33, another neighbor of Kellers, was always one year ahead of the draft, so he never served in World War II, instead staying home to marry George's former sweetheart, Lydia. He draws up Larry's horoscope and tells Kate that Larry must still be alive, because the day he died was meant to be his "favorable day". This strengthens Kate's faith and makes it much harder for Ann to move on.

Lydia Lubey — Lydia, 27, Franks's wife, was George Deever's love interest before the war; after he went away, she married Frank and they soon had three children. She is a model of peaceful domesticity and lends a much-needed cheerful air to several moments of the play.

Unseen characters

Larry Keller — Larry has been Missing in Action for some years at the start of the play. However, he has a significant effect on the play through his mother's insistence that he is still alive and his brother's love for Larry's childhood sweetheart, Ann. Comparisons are also made in the story between Larry and Chris; in particular, their father describes Larry as the more sensible one with a "head for business".

Steve Deever — George and Ann's father, and Joe's former business partner. Steve is sent to prison for shipping faulty aircraft parts—a crime that not only he, but also the exonerated Keller committed.

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"ALL MY SONS"
Actor's Information - March 24 & 25, 2024 Auditions
Please complete and turn in at the audition

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Cell: _____ Do You Text: _____

Email: _____ Age: _____

List any Theatrical Experience: _____

Part(s) You Wish to Audition For: (list your order of preference). Ages are approximate.

_____ Joe Keller – 60
_____ Kate Keller – 50
_____ Chris Keller – 32
_____ Ann Deever – 26
_____ George Deever – 31

_____ Dr. Jim Bayliss – 40
_____ Sue Bayliss – 40
_____ Frank Lubey – 33
_____ Lydia Lubey – 27

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For Director's Use

Notified of Casting Decision By: _____ Date: _____

Comments:

FRANK. Well, I'm working on his horoscope.

KELLER. How can you make him a horoscope? That's for the future, ain't it?

FRANK. Well, what I'm doing is this, see. Larry was reported missing on November 25th, right?

KELLER. Yeah?

FRANK. Well, then, we assume that if he was killed it was on November 25th. Now, what Kate wants...

KELLER. Oh, Kate asked you to make a horoscope?

FRANK. Yeah, what she wants to find out is whether November 25th was a favorable day for Larry.

KELLER. What is that, favorable day?

FRANK. Well, a favorable day for a person is a fortunate day, according to his stars. In other words it would be practically impossible for him to have died on his favorable day.

KELLER. Well, was that his favorable day?—November 25th?

FRANK. That's what I'm working on to find out. It takes time! See, the point is, if November 25th was his favorable day, then it's completely possible he's alive somewhere, because...I mean it's possible. *(He notices Jim now. Jim is looking at him as though at an idiot. To Jim—with an uncertain laugh.)* I didn't even see you.

KELLER. *(To Jim.)* Is he talkin' sense?

JIM. Him? He's all right. He's just completely out of his mind, that's all.

FRANK. *(Peeved.)* The trouble with you is, you don't *believe* in anything.

JIM. And your trouble is that you believe in *anything*. You didn't see my kid this morning, did you?

FRANK. No.

KELLER. Imagine? He walked off with his thermometer. Right out of his bag.

JIM. *(Gets up.)* What a problem. One look at a girl and he takes her temperature. *(Goes to driveway, looks upstage toward street.)*

FRANK. That boy's going to be a real doctor; he's smart.

JIM. Over my dead body he'll be a doctor. A good beginning, too.

FRANK. Why? It's an honorable profession.

JIM. (*Looks at him tiredly.*) Frank, will you stop talking like a civics book? (*Keller laughs.*)

FRANK. Why, I saw a movie a couple of weeks ago, reminded me of you. There was a doctor in that picture...

KELLER. Don Ameche!

FRANK. I think it was, yeah. And he worked in his basement discovering things. That's what you ought to do; you could help humanity, instead of...

JIM. I would love to help humanity on a Warner Brothers salary.

KELLER. (*Points at him, laughing.*) That's very good, Jim.

JIM. (*Looks toward house.*) Well, where's the beautiful girl was supposed to be here?

FRANK. (*Excited.*) Annie came?

KELLER. Sure, sleepin' upstairs. We picked her up on the one o'clock train last night. Wonderful thing. Girl leaves here, a scrawny kid. Couple of years go by, she's a regular woman. Hardly recognized her, and she was running in and out of this yard all her life. That was a very happy family used to live in your house, Jim.

JIM. Like to meet her. The block can use a pretty girl. In the whole neighborhood there's not a damned thing to look at. (*Enter Sue, Jim's wife, from L. She is rounding forty, an overweight woman who fears it. On seeing her Jim wryly adds:*) ...Except my wife, of course.

SUE. (*In same spirit.*) Mrs. Adams is on the phone, you dog.

JIM. (*To Keller.*) Such is the condition which prevails, (*Going to his wife.*) my love, my light...

SUE. Don't sniff around me. (*Points to their house, L.*) And give her a nasty answer. I can smell her perfume over the phone.

JIM. What's the matter with her now?

SUE. I don't know, dear. She sounds like she's in terrible pain—unless her mouth is full of candy.

JIM. Why don't you just tell her to lay down?

SUE. She enjoys it more when you tell her to lay down. And when are you going to see Mr. Hubbard?

①

JIM. My dear; Mr. Hubbard is not sick, and I have better things to do than to sit there and hold his hand.

SUE. It seems to me that for ten dollars you could hold his hand.

JIM. *(To Keller.)* If your son wants to play golf tell him I'm ready. *(Going L.)* Or if he'd like to take a trip around the world for about thirty years. *(He exits L.)*

KELLER. Why do you needle him? He's a doctor, women are supposed to call him up.

SUE. All I said was Mrs. Adams is on the phone. Can I have some of your parsley?

KELLER. Yeah, sure. *(She goes L. to parsley box and pulls some parsley.)* You were a nurse too long, Susie. You're too...too...realistic.

SUE. *(Laughing, points at him.)* Now you said it!
(Enter Lydia Lubey from R. She is a robust, laughing girl of twenty-seven.)

LYDIA. Frank, the toaster... *(Sees the others.)* Hya.

KELLER. Hello!

LYDIA. *(To Frank.)* The toaster is off again.

FRANK. Well, plug it in, I just fixed it.

LYDIA. *(Kindly, but insistently.)* Please, dear, fix it back like it was before.

FRANK. I don't know why you can't learn to turn on a simple thing like a toaster! *(Frank exits R.)*

SUE. *(Laughs.)* Thomas Edison.

LYDIA. *(Apologetically.)* He's really very handy. *(She sees broken tree.)* Oh, did the wind get your tree?

KELLER. Yeah, last night.

LYDIA. Oh, what a pity. Annie get in?

KELLER. She'll be down soon. Wait'll you meet her, Sue, she's a knockout.

SUE. I should've been a man. People are always introducing me to beautiful women. *(To Joe.)* Tell her to come over later; I imagine she'd like to see what we did with her house. And thanks. *(Sue exits L.)*

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LYDIA. Is she still unhappy, Joe?

KELLER. Annie? I don't suppose she goes around dancing on her toes, but she seems to be over it.

LYDIA. She going to get married? Is there anybody...?

KELLER. I suppose...say, it's a couple years already. She can't mourn a boy forever.

LYDIA. It's so strange...Annie's here and not even married. And I've got three babies. I always thought it'd be the other way around.

KELLER. Well, that's what a war does. I had two sons, now I got one. It changed all the tallies. In my day when you had sons it was an honor. Today a doctor could make a million dollars if he could figure out a way to bring a boy into the world without a trigger finger.

LYDIA. You know, I was just reading... *(Enter Chris Keller from house, stands in doorway.)* Hya, Chris...

FRANK. *(Shouts from off R.)* Lydia, come in here! If you want the toaster to work don't plug in the malted mixer.

LYDIA. *(Embarrassed, laughs.)* Did I...?

FRANK. And the next time I fix something don't tell me I'm crazy! Now come in here!

LYDIA. *(To Keller.)* I'll never hear the end of this one.

KELLER. *(Calling to Frank.)* So what's the difference? Instead of toast have a malted!

LYDIA. Sh! sh! *(She exits R. laughing.)*
(Chris watches her off. He is thirty-two; like his father, solidly built, a listener. A man capable of immense affection and loyalty. He has a cup of coffee in one hand, part of a doughnut in other.)

KELLER. You want the paper?

CHRIS. That's all right, just the book section. *(He bends down and pulls out part of paper on porch floor.)*

KELLER. You're always reading the book section and you never buy a book.

CHRIS. *(Coming down to settee.)* I like to keep abreast of my ignorance. *(He sits on settee.)*

KELLER. What is that, every week a new book comes out?

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KELLER. You don't sleep, that's why. She's wearing out more bedroom slippers than shoes.

KATE. I had a terrible night. *(She stops moving.)* I never had a night like that.

CHRIS. *(Looks at Keller.)* What was it, Mom? Did you dream?

KATE. More, more than a dream.

CHRIS. *(Hesitantly.)* About Larry?

KATE. I was fast asleep, and... *(Raising her arm over the audience.)* Remember the way he used to fly low past the house when he was in training? When we used to see his face in the cockpit going by? That's the way I saw him. Only high up. Way, way up, where the clouds are. He was so real I could reach out and touch him. And suddenly he started to fall. And crying, crying to me... "Mom, Mom!" I could hear him like he was in the room. "Mom!"...it was his voice! If I could touch him I knew I could stop him, if I could only... *(Breaks off, allowing her outstretched hand to fall.)* I woke up and it was so funny... The wind...it was like the roaring of his engine. I came out here...I must've still been half asleep. I could hear that roaring like he was going by. The tree snapped right in front of me...and I like...came awake. *(She is looking at tree. She suddenly realizes something, turns with a reprimanding finger shaking slightly at Keller.)* See? We should never have planted that tree. I said so in the first place: It was too soon to plant a tree for him.

CHRIS. *(Alarmed.)* Too soon!

KATE. *(Angering.)* We rushed into it. Everybody was in such a hurry to bury him. I said not to plant it yet. *(To Keller.)* I told you to...!

CHRIS. Mother, Mother! *(She looks into his face.)* The wind blew it down. What significance has that got? What are you talking about? Mother, please... Don't go through it all again, will you? It's no good, it doesn't accomplish anything. I've been thinking, y'know?—maybe we ought to put our minds to forgetting him?

KATE. That's the third time you've said that this week.

CHRIS. Because it's not right; we never took up our lives again. We're like at a railroad station waiting for a train that never comes in.

KATE. *(Presses top of her head.)* Get me an aspirin, heh?

CHRIS. Sure, and let's break out of this, heh, Mom? I thought the four of us might go out to dinner a couple of nights, maybe go dancing out at the shore.

KATE. Fine. *(To Keller.)* We can do it tonight.

KELLER. Swell with me!

CHRIS. Sure, let's have some fun. *(To Mother.)* You'll start with this aspirin. *(He goes up and into house with new spirit. Her smile vanishes.)*

KATE. *(With an accusing undertone.)* Why did he invite her here?

KELLER. Why does that bother you?

KATE. She's been in New York three and a half years, why all of a sudden...?

KELLER. Well, maybe...maybe he just wanted to see her...

KATE. Nobody comes seven hundred miles "just to see."

KELLER. What do you mean? He lived next door to the girl all his life, why shouldn't he want to see her again? *(Kate looks at him critically.)* Don't look at me like that, he didn't tell me any more than he told you.

KATE. *(A warning and a question.)* He's not going to marry her.

KELLER. How do you know he's even thinking of it?

KATE. It's got that about it.

KELLER. *(Sharply watching her reaction.)* Well? So what?

KATE. *(Alarmed.)* What's going on here, Joe?

KELLER. Now listen, kid...

KATE. *(Avoiding contact with him.)* She's not his girl, Joe; she knows she's not.

KELLER. You can't read her mind.

KATE. Then why is she still single? New York is full of men, why isn't she married? *(Pause.)* Probably a hundred people told her she's foolish, but she's waited.

KELLER. How do you know why she waited?

KATE. She knows what I know, that's why. She's faithful as a rock. In my worst moments, I think of her waiting, and I know again that I'm right.

KELLER. Look, it's a nice day. What are we arguing for?

KATE. (*Warningly.*) Nobody in this house dast take her faith away, Joe. Strangers might. But not his father, not his brother.

KELLER. (*Exasperated.*) What do you want me to do? What do you want?

KATE. I want you to act like he's coming back. Both of you. Don't think I haven't noticed you since Chris invited her. I won't stand for any nonsense.

KELLER. But, Kate...

KATE. Because if he's not coming back, then I'll kill myself! Laugh. Laugh at me. (*She points to tree.*) But why did that happen the very night she came back? Laugh, but there are meanings in such things. She goes to sleep in his room and his memorial breaks in pieces. Look at it; look. (*She sits on bench at his L.*) Joe...

KELLER. Calm yourself.

KATE. Believe with me, Joe. I can't stand all alone.

KELLER. Calm yourself.

KATE. Only last week a man turned up in Detroit, missing longer than Larry. You read it yourself.

KELLER. All right, all right, calm yourself.

KATE. You above all have got to believe, you...

KELLER. (*Rises.*) Why me above all?

KATE. ...Just don't stop believing. (*Kate visibly shaking*)

KELLER. What does that mean, me above all? (*continues next page*)

BERT. Mr. Keller! Say, Mr. Keller... (*Pointing to driveway.*) Tommy just said it again!

KELLER. (*Not remembering any of it.*) Said what?... Who?

BERT. The dirty word.

KELLER. Oh. Well.

BERT. Gee, aren't you going to arrest him? I warned him.

KATE. (*With suddenness.*) Stop that, Bert. Go home. (*Bert backs up as she advances.*) There's no jail here.

KELLER. (*As though to say: Oh, what the hell let her believe that?*)

~~”) Kate.
KATE. (Turning on Keller, furiously.) There's no jail here! I want you
stop that jail business! (He turns, shamed, but peeved.)
BERT. (Past her to Keller.) He's right across the street...
KATE. Go home, Bert. (Bert turns around and goes up driveway. She
shaken. Her speech is bitten off, extremely urgent.) I want you
stop that, Joe. That whole jail business.~~

KELLER. (Alarmed, therefore angered.) Look at you, look at you
shaking.

KATE. (Trying to control herself, moving about clasping her hands.)
I can't help it.

KELLER. What have I got to hide? What the hell is the matter with
you, Kate?

KATE. I didn't say you had anything to hide, I'm just telling you to
stop it! Now stop it!

(As Ann and Chris appear on porch. Ann is twenty-six, gentle but
despite herself capable of holding fast to what she knows. Chris opens
door for her.)

ANN. Hya, Joe! (She leads off a general laugh that is not self-conscious
because they know one another too well.)

CHRIS. (Bringing Ann down, with an outstretched, chivalric arm.)
Take a breath of that air, kid. You never get air like that in New York.

KATE. (Genuinely overcome with it.) Annie, where did you get that
dress!

ANN. I couldn't resist. I'm taking it right off before I ruin it. (Swings
around.) How's that for three weeks' salary?

KATE. (To Keller.) Isn't she the most...? (To Ann.) It's gorgeous,
simply gor...

CHRIS. (To Mother.) No kidding, now, isn't she the prettiest gal
you ever saw?

KATE. (Caught short by his obvious admiration, she finds herself
reaching out for a glass of water and aspirin in his hand, and...) You
gained a little weight, didn't you, darling? (She gulps pill and drinks.)

ANN. It comes and goes.

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KELLER. Look how nice her legs turned out!

ANN. (*Runs to fence, L.*) Boy, the poplars got thick, didn't they?

KELLER. (*Moves U. to settee and sits.*) Well, it's three years, Annie. We're gettin' old, kid.

KATE. How does Mom like New York? (*Ann keeps looking through trees.*)

ANN. (*A little hurt.*) Why'd they take our hammock away?

KELLER. Oh, no, it broke. Couple of years ago.

KATE. What broke? He had one of his light lunches and flopped into it.

ANN. (*Laughs and turns back toward Jim's yard...*) Oh, excuse me! (*Jim has come to fence and is looking over it. He is smoking a cigar. As she cries out, he comes on around onstage.*)

JIM. How do you do. (*To Chris.*) She looks very intelligent!

CHRIS. Ann, this is Jim... Doctor Bayliss.

ANN. (*Shaking Jim's hand.*) Oh sure, he writes a lot about you.

JIM. Don't believe it. He likes everybody. In the Battalion he was known as Mother McKeller.

ANN. I can believe it... You know—? (*To Mother.*) It's so strange seeing him come out of that yard. (*To Chris.*) I guess I never grew up. It almost seems that Mom and Pop are in there now. And you and my brother doing algebra, and Larry trying to copy my homework. Gosh, those dear dead days beyond recall.

JIM. Well, I hope that doesn't mean you want me to move out?

SUE. (*Calling from off L.*) Jim, come in here! Mr. Hubbard is on the phone!

JIM. I told you I don't want...

SUE. (*Commandingly sweet.*) Please, dear! Please!!

JIM. (*Resigned.*) All right, Susie, (*Trailing off.*) all right, all right... (*To Ann.*) I've only met you, Ann, but if I may offer you a piece of advice—When you marry, never—even in your mind—never count your husband's money.

SUE. (*From off.*) Jim?!

JIM. At once! (*Turns and goes L.*) At once. (*He exits L.*)

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~~ANN. (Turns and goes L.) At once (she says)~~
KATE. (*Ann is looking at her. She speaks meaningfully.*) I told her to take up the guitar. It'd be a common interest for them. (*They laugh.*) Well, he loves the guitar!

ANN. (*As though to overcome Mother, she becomes suddenly lively, crosses to Keller on settee, sits on his lap.*) Let's eat at the shore tonight! Raise some hell around here, like we used to before Larry went!

KATE. (*Emotionally.*) You think of him! You see? (*Triumphantly.*) She thinks of him!

ANN. (*With an uncomprehending smile.*) What do you mean, Kate?

KATE. Nothing. Just that you...remember him, he's in your thoughts.

ANN. That's a funny thing to say; how could I help remembering him?

KATE. (*It is drawing to a head the wrong way for her; she starts anew. She rises and comes to Ann.*) Did you hang up your things?

ANN. Yeah... (*To Chris.*) Say, you've sure gone in for clothes. I could hardly find room in the closet.

KATE. No, don't you remember? That's Larry's room.

ANN. You mean...they're Larry's?

KATE. Didn't you recognize them?

ANN. (*Slowly rising, a little embarrassed.*) Well, it never occurred to me that you'd...I mean the shoes are all shined.

KATE. Yes, dear. (*Slight pause. Ann can't stop staring at her. Mother breaks it by speaking with the relish of gossip, putting her arm around Ann and walking S. L. with her.*) For so long I've been aching for a nice conversation with you, Annie. Tell me something.

ANN. What?

KATE. I don't know. Something nice.

CHRIS. (*Wryly.*) She means do you go out much?

KATE. Oh, shut up.

KELLER. And are any of them serious?

KATE. (*Laughing, sits in her chair.*) Why don't you both choke?

KELLER. Annie, you can't go into a restaurant with that woman

anymore. In five minutes thirty-nine strange people are sitting at the table telling her their life story.

KATE. If I can't ask Annie a personal question...

KELLER. Askin' is all right, but don't beat her over the head. You're beatin' her, you're beatin' her. *(They are laughing.)*

ANN. *(To Mother. Takes pan of beans off stool, puts them on floor under chair and sits.)* Don't let them bulldoze you. Ask me anything you like. What do you want to know, Kate? Come on, let's gossip.

KATE. *(To Chris and Keller.)* She's the only one is got any sense. *(To Ann.)* Your mother...she's not getting a divorce, heh?

ANN. No, she's calmed down about it now. I think when he gets out they'll probably live together. In New York, of course.

KATE. That's fine. Because your father is still...I mean he's a decent man after all is said and done.

ANN. I don't care. She can take him back if she likes.

KATE. And you? You... *(Shakes her head negatively.)* ...go out much? *(Slight pause.)*

ANN. *(Delicately.)* You mean am I still waiting for him?

KATE. Well, no, I don't expect you to wait for him but...

ANN. *(Kindly.)* But that's what you mean, isn't it?

KATE. ...Well...yes.

ANN. Well, I'm not, Kate.

KATE. *(Faintly.)* You're not?

ANN. Isn't it ridiculous? You don't really imagine he's...?

KATE. I know, dear, but don't say it's ridiculous, because the papers were full of it; I don't know about New York, but there was half a page about a man missing even longer than Larry, and he turned up from Burma.

CHRIS. *(Coming to Ann.)* He couldn't have wanted to come home very badly, Mom.

KATE. Don't be so smart.

CHRIS. You can have a helluva time in Burma.

ANN. *(Rises and swings around in back of Chris.)* So I've heard.

CHRIS. Mother, I'll bet you money that you're the only woman in the country who after three years is still...

KATE. You're sure?

CHRIS. Yes, I am.

KATE. Well, if you're sure then you're sure. *(She turns her head away an instant.)* They don't say it on the radio but I'm sure that in the dark at night they're still waiting for their sons.

CHRIS. Mother, you're absolutely—

KATE. *(Waving him off.)* Don't be so damned smart! Now stop it! *(Slight pause.)* There are just a few things you *don't* know. All of you. And I'll tell you one of them, Annie. Deep, deep in your heart you've always been waiting for him.

ANN. *(Resolutely.)* No, Kate.

KATE. *(With increasing demand.)* But deep in your heart, Annie!

CHRIS. She ought to know, shouldn't she?

KATE. Don't let them tell you what to think. Listen to your heart. Only your heart.

ANN. Why does your heart tell you he's alive?

KATE. Because he has to be.

ANN. But why, Kate?

KATE. *(Going to her.)* Because certain things have to be, and certain things can never be. Like the sun has to rise, it has to be. That's why there's God. Otherwise anything could happen. But there's God, so certain things can never happen. I would know, Annie—just like I knew the day he *(Indicates Chris.)* went into that terrible battle. Did he write me? Was it in the papers? No, but that morning I couldn't raise my head off the pillow. Ask Joe. Suddenly, I knew. I knew! And he was nearly killed that day. Ann, you *know* I'm right!

(Ann stands there in silence, then turns trembling, going upstage.)

ANN. No, Kate.

KATE. I have to have some tea.

(Frank appears from L. carrying ladder.)

FRANK. *(Coming down.)* How are you, gee whiz?

ANN. *(Taking his hand.)* Why, Frank, you're losing your hair.

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right, so...so he's a little man, your father, always scared of loud
voices. What'll the Major say?—Half a day's production shot.
What'll I say? You know what I mean? Human. *(He pauses.)* So he
takes out his tools and he...covers over the cracks. All right...that's
bad, it's wrong, but that's what a little man does. If I could have gone
in that day I'd-a told him—junk 'em, Steve, we can afford it. But alone
he was afraid. But I know he meant no harm. He believed they'd hold
up a hundred percent. That's a mistake, but it ain't murder. You
mustn't feel that way about him. You understand me? It ain't right.

ANN. *(Regards him a moment.)* Joe, let's forget it.

KELLER. Annie, the day the news came about Larry he was in the
next cell to mine...Dad. And he cried, Annie...he cried half the
night.

ANN. *(Touched.)* He shoulda cried all night. *(Slight pause.)*

KELLER. *(Almost angered.)* Annie, I do not understand why you...!

CHRIS. *(Breaking in—with nervous urgency.)* Are you going to
stop it?!

ANN. Don't yell at him. He just wants everybody happy.

KELLER. *(Clasps her around waist, smiling.)* That's my sentiments.
Can you stand steak?

CHRIS. And champagne!

KELLER. Now you're operatin'! I'll call Swanson's for a table! Big
time tonight, Annie!

ANN. Can't scare me.

KELLER. *(To Chris, pointing at Ann.)* I like that girl. Wrap her up
(They laugh. Goes up porch.) You got nice legs, Annie!... I want to
see everybody drunk tonight. *(Pointing to Chris.)* Look at him, he's
bruskin'! *(He goes laughing into house.)*

CHRIS. *(Calling after him.)* Drink your tea, Casanova. *(He turns to
Ann.)* Isn't he a great guy?

ANN. You're the only one I know who loves his parents!

CHRIS. I know. It went out of style, didn't it?

ANN. *(With a sudden touch of sadness.)* It's all right. It's a good
thing. *(She looks about.)* You know? It's lovely here. The air is sweet.

CHRIS. (*Hopefully.*) You're not sorry you came?

ANN. Not sorry, no. But I'm...not going to stay...

CHRIS. Why?

ANN. In the first place, your mother as much as told me to go.

CHRIS. Well...

ANN. You saw that...and then you...you've been kind of...

CHRIS. What?

ANN. Well...kind of embarrassed ever since I got here.

CHRIS. The trouble is I planned on kind of sneaking up on you over a period of a week or so. But they take it for granted that we're all set.

ANN. I knew they would. Your mother anyway.

CHRIS. How did you know?

ANN. From *her* point of view, why else would I come?

CHRIS. Well...would you want to? (*Ann studies him.*) I guess you know this is why I asked you to come.

ANN. I guess this is why I came.

CHRIS. Ann, I love you. I love you a great deal. (*Finally.*) I love you. (*Pause. She waits.*) I have no imagination...that's all I know to tell you. (*Ann, waiting, ready.*) I'm embarrassing you. I didn't want to tell it to you here. I wanted someplace we'd never been; a place where we'd be brand new to each other... You feel it's wrong here, don't you? This yard, this chair? I want you to be ready for me. I don't want to win you away from anything.

ANN. (*Putting her arms around him.*) Oh, Chris, I've been ready a long, long time!

CHRIS. Then he's gone forever. You're sure.

ANN. I almost got married two years ago.

CHRIS. ...why didn't you?

ANN. You started to write to me... (*Slight pause.*)

CHRIS. You felt something that far back?

ANN. Every day since!

CHRIS. Ann, why didn't you let me know?

ANN. I was waiting for you, Chris. Till then you never wrote. And when you did, what did you say? You sure can be ambiguous, you know.

CHRIS. *(Looks towards house, then at her, trembling.)* Give me a kiss, Ann. Give me a... *(They kiss.)* God, I kissed you, Annie, I kissed Annie. How long, how long I've been waiting to kiss you!

ANN. I'll never forgive you. Why did you wait all these years? All I've done is sit and wonder if I was crazy for thinking of you.

CHRIS. Annie, we're going to live now! I'm going to make you so happy. *(He kisses her, but without their bodies touching.)*

ANN. *(A little embarrassed.)* Not like that you're not.

CHRIS. I kissed you...

ANN. Like Larry's brother. Do it like you, Chris. *(He breaks away from her abruptly.)* What is it, Chris?

CHRIS. Let's drive someplace... I want to be alone with you.

ANN. No...what is it, Chris, your mother?

CHRIS. No...nothing like that...

ANN. Then what's wrong? ...Even in your letters, there was something ashamed.

CHRIS. Yes. I suppose I have been. But it's going from me.

ANN. You've got to tell me—

CHRIS. I don't know how to start. *(He takes her hand. He speaks quietly, factually at first.)*

ANN. It wouldn't work this way. *(Slight pause.)*

CHRIS. It's all mixed up with so many other things... You remember, overseas, I was in command of a company?

ANN. Yeah, sure.

CHRIS. Well, I lost them.

ANN. How many?

CHRIS. Just about all.

ANN. Oh, gee!

CHRIS. It takes a little time to toss that off. Because they weren't just men. For instance, one time it'd been raining several days and this kid came to me, and gave me his last pair of dry socks. Put

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them in my pocket. That's only a little thing...but...that's the kind of guys I had. They didn't die; they killed themselves for each other. I mean that exactly; a little more selfish and they'd've been here today. And I got an idea—watching them go down. Everything was being destroyed, see, but it seemed to me that one new thing was made. A kind of...responsibility. Man for man. You understand me?—To show that, to bring that on to the earth again like some kind of a monument and everyone would feel it standing there, behind him, and it would make a difference to him. *(Pause.)* And then I came home and it was incredible. I...there was no meaning in it here; the whole thing to them was a kind of a—bus accident. I went to work with Dad, and that rat-race again. I felt...what you said...ashamed somehow. Because nobody was changed at all. It seemed to make suckers out of a lot of guys. I felt wrong to be alive, to open the bank-book, to drive the new car, to see the new refrigerator. I mean you can take those things out of a war, but when you drive that car you've got to know that it came out of the love a man can have for a man, you've got to be a little better because of that. Otherwise what you have is really loot, and there's blood on it. I didn't want to take any of it. And I guess that included you.

ANN. And you still feel that way?

CHRIS. I want you now, Annie.

ANN. Because you mustn't feel that way anymore. Because you have a right to whatever you have. Everything, Chris, understand that? To me, too... And the money, there's nothing wrong in your money. Your father put hundreds of planes in the air, you should be proud. A man should be paid for that...

CHRIS. Oh Annie, Annie... I'm going to make a fortune for you!

KELLER. *(Offstage.)* Hello... Yes. Sure.

ANN. *(Laughing softly.)* What'll I do with a fortune...? *(They kiss. Keller enters from house.)*

KELLER. *(Thumbing toward house.)* Hey, Ann, your brother... *(They step apart shyly. Keller comes down, and wryly...)* What is this, Labor Day?

CHRIS. *(Waving him away, knowing the kidding will be endless.)* All right, all right...

KATE. You think just because you like everybody, they like you!

CHRIS. All right, stop working yourself up. Just leave everything to me.

KATE. When George goes home tell her to go with him.

CHRIS. (*Noncommittally.*) Don't worry about Annie.

KATE. Steve is her father, too.

CHRIS. Are you going to cut it out? Now, come.

KATE. (*Going upstage with him.*) You don't realize how people can hate, Chris, they can hate so much they'll tear the world to pieces... (*Ann, dressed up, appears on porch.*)

CHRIS. Look! She's dressed already. (*As he and Mother mount porch.*) I've just got to put on a shirt.

ANN. (*In a preoccupied way.*) Are you feeling well, Kate?

KATE. What's the difference, dear. There are certain people, y'know, the sicker they get the longer they live. (*She goes into house.*)

CHRIS. You look nice.

ANN. We're going to tell her tonight.

CHRIS. Absolutely, don't worry about it.

ANN. I wish we could tell her now. I can't stand scheming. My stomach gets hard.

CHRIS. It's not scheming, we'll just get her in a better mood.

KATE. (*Offstage, in the house.*) Joe, are you going to sleep all day!

ANN. (*Laughing.*) The only one who's relaxed is your father. He's fast asleep.

CHRIS. I'm relaxed.

ANN. Are you?

CHRIS. Look. (*He holds out his hand and makes it shake.*) Let me know when George gets here.

(*He goes into the house. She moves aimlessly, and then is drawn toward tree stump. She goes to it, hesitantly touches broken top in the hush of her thoughts. Offstage Lydia calls, "Johnny! Come get your supper!" Sue enters from L., and halts, seeing Ann.*)

SUE. Is my husband...?

(*startles Ann*)

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ANN. (*Turns, startled.*) Oh!

SUE. I'm terribly sorry.

ANN. It's all right, I...I'm a little silly about the dark.

SUE. (*Looks about.*) It is getting dark.

ANN. Are you looking for your husband?

SUE. As usual. (*Laughs tiredly.*) He spends so much time here, they'll be charging him rent.

ANN. Nobody was dressed so he drove over to the depot to pick up my brother.

SUE. Oh, your brother's in?

ANN. Yeah, they ought to be here any minute now. Will you have a cold drink?

SUE. I will, thanks. (*Ann goes to table and pours.*) My husband. Too hot to drive me to beach.—Men are like little boys; for the neighbors they'll always cut the grass.

ANN. People like to do things for the Kellers. Been that way since I can remember.

SUE. It's amazing. I guess your brother's coming to give you away, heh?

ANN. (*Giving her drink.*) I don't know. I suppose.

SUE. You must be all nerved up.

ANN. It's always a problem getting yourself married, isn't it?

SUE. That depends on your shape, of course. I don't see why you should have had a problem.

ANN. I've had chances—

SUE. I'll bet. It's romantic...it's very unusual to me, marrying the brother of your sweetheart.

ANN. I don't know. I think it's mostly that whenever I need somebody to tell me the truth I've always thought of Chris. When he tells you something you know it's so. He relaxes me.

SUE. And he's got money. That's important, you know.

ANN. It wouldn't matter to me.

SUE. You'd be surprised. It makes all the difference. I married an interne. On my salary. And that was bad, because as soon as a woman

supports a man he owes her something. You can never owe somebody without resenting them. (*Ann laughs.*) That's true, you know.

ANN. Underneath, I think the doctor is very devoted.

SUE. Oh, certainly. But it's bad when a man always sees the bars in front of him. Jim thinks he's in jail all the time.

ANN. Oh...

SUE. That's why I've been intending to ask you a small favor, Ann...it's something very important to me.

ANN. Certainly, if I can do it.

SUE. You can. When you take up housekeeping, try to find a place away from here.

ANN. Are you fooling?

SUE. I'm very serious. My husband is unhappy with Chris around.

ANN. How is that?

SUE. Jim's a successful doctor. But he's got an idea he'd like to do medical research. Discover things. You see?

ANN. Well, isn't that good?

SUE. Research pays twenty-five dollars a week minus laundering the hair shirt. You've got to give up your life to go into it.

ANN. How does Chris?

SUE. (*With growing feeling.*) Chris makes people want to be better than it's possible to be. He does that to people.

ANN. Is that bad?

SUE. My husband has a family, dear. Every time he has a session with Chris he feels as though he's compromising by not giving up everything for research. As though Chris or anybody else isn't compromising. It happens with Jim every couple of years. He meets a man and makes a statue out of him.

ANN. Maybe he's right. I don't mean that Chris is a statue, but...

SUE. Now darling, you know he's not right.

ANN. I don't agree with you. Chris...

SUE. Let's face it, dear. Chris is working with his father, isn't he? He's taking money out of that business every week in the year.

ANN. What of it?

SUE. You ask me what of it?

ANN. I certainly do ask you. (*She seems about to burst out.*) You oughtn't cast aspersions like that, I'm surprised at you.

SUE. You're surprised at me!

ANN. He'd never take five cents out of that plant if there was anything wrong in it.

SUE. You know that.

ANN. I know it. I resent everything you've said.

SUE. (*Moving toward her.*) You know what I resent, dear?

ANN. Please, I don't want to argue.

SUE. I resent living next door to the Holy Family. It makes me look like a bum, you understand?

ANN. I can't do anything about that.

SUE. Who is he to ruin a man's life? Everybody knows Joe pulled a fast one to get out of jail.

ANN. That's not true!

SUE. Then why don't you go out and talk to people? Go on, talk to them. There's not a person on the block who doesn't know the truth.

ANN. That's a lie. People come here all the time for cards and...

SUE. So what? They give him credit for being smart. I do, too, I've got nothing against Joe. But if Chris wants people to put on the hair shirt let him take off his broadcloth. He's driving my husband crazy with that phony idealism of his, and I'm at the end of my rope on it! (*Chris enters on porch, wearing shirt and tie now. She turns quickly, hearing. With a smile.*) Hello, darling. How's Mother?

CHRIS. I thought George came.

SUE. No, it was just us.

CHRIS. (*Coming down to them.*) Susie, do me a favor, heh? Go up to Mother and see if you can calm her. She's all worked up.

SUE. She still doesn't know about you two?

CHRIS. (*Laughs a little.*) Well, she senses it, I guess. You know my mother.

SUE. (*Going up to porch.*) Oh, yeah, she's psychic.

CHRIS. Maybe there's something in the medicine chest.

SUE. I'll give her one of everything. (*On porch.*) Don't worry about Kate; couple of drinks, dance her around a little...she'll love Ann. (*To Ann.*) Because you're the female version of him. (*Chris laughs.*) Don't be alarmed, I said version. (*She goes into house.*)

CHRIS. Interesting woman, isn't she?

ANN. Yeah, she's very interesting.

CHRIS. She's a great nurse, you know she is.

ANN. (*In tension, but trying to control it.*) Are you still doing that?

CHRIS. (*Sensing something wrong, but still smiling.*) Doing what?

ANN. As soon as you get to know somebody you find a distinction for them. How do you know she's a great nurse?

CHRIS. What's the matter, Ann?

ANN. The woman hates you. She despises you!

CHRIS. Hey...what's hit you?

ANN. Gee, Chris...

CHRIS. What happened here?

ANN. You never... Why didn't you tell me?

CHRIS. Tell you what?

ANN. She says they think Joe is guilty.

CHRIS. What difference does it make what they think?

ANN. I don't care what they think, I just don't understand why you took the trouble to deny it. You said it was all forgotten.

CHRIS. I didn't want you to feel there was anything wrong in you coming here, that's all. I know a lot of people think my father was guilty, and I assumed there might be some question in your mind.

ANN. But I never once said I suspected him.

CHRIS. Nobody says it.

ANN. Chris, I know how much you love him, but it could never..

CHRIS. Do you think I could forgive him if he'd done that thing?

ANN. I'm not here out of a blue sky, Chris. I turned my back on my father, if there's anything wrong here now.

(Lydia enters on porch. As soon as she sees him:)

LYDIA. Hey, Georgie! Georgie! Georgie! Georgie! Georgie!

(She comes down to him eagerly. She has a flowered hat in her hand, which Kate takes from her as she goes to George. They shake hands eagerly, warmly.)

GEORGE. Hello, Laughy. What'd you do, grow?

LYDIA. I'm a big girl now.

KATE. (Taking hat from her.) Look what she can do to a hat!

ANN. (To Lydia, admiring the hat.) Did you make that?

KATE. In ten minutes! (She puts it on.)

LYDIA. (Fixing it on Kate's head.) I only rearranged it.

GEORGE. You still make your own clothes?

CHRIS. (Of mother.) Ain't she classy! All she needs now is a Russian wolfhound.

KATE. (Moving her head from L. to R.) It feels like somebody is sitting on my head.

ANN. No, it's beautiful, Kate.

KATE. (Kisses Lydia—to George.) She's a genius! You should've married her. (They laugh.) This one can feed you!

LYDIA. (Strangely embarrassed.) Oh, stop that, Kate.

GEORGE. (To Lydia.) Didn't I hear you had a baby?

KATE. You don't hear so good. She's got three babies.

GEORGE. (A little hurt by it—to Lydia.) No kidding, three?

LYDIA. Yeah, it was one, two, three—You've been away a long time, Georgie.

GEORGE. I'm beginning to realize.

KATE. (To Chris and George.) The trouble with you kids is you *think* too much.

LYDIA. Well, we think, too.

KATE. Yes, but not all the time.

GEORGE. (With almost obvious envy.) They never took Frank, heh?

LYDIA. (A little apologetically.) No, he was always one year ahead of the draft.

KATE. It's amazing. When they were calling boys twenty-seven, Frank was just twenty-eight; when they made it twenty-eight, he was just twenty-nine. That's why he took up astrology. It's all in when you were born, it just goes to show.

CHRIS. What does it go to show?

KATE. *(To Chris.)* Don't be so intelligent. Some superstitions are very nice! *(To Lydia.)* Did he finish Larry's horoscope?

LYDIA. I'll ask him now, I'm going in. *(To George, a little sadly, almost embarrassed.)* Would you like to see my babies? Come on.

GEORGE. I don't think so, Lydia.

LYDIA. *(Understanding.)* All right. Good luck to you, George.

GEORGE. Thanks. And to you... And Frank. *(She smiles at him, turns and goes off R. to her house. George stands staring after her.)* *gazing*

LYDIA. *(As she runs off.)* Oh, Frank!

KATE. *(Reading his thoughts.)* She got pretty, heh?

GEORGE. *(Sadly.)* Very pretty.

KATE. *(As a reprimand.)* She's beautiful, you damned fool!

GEORGE. *(Looks around longingly; and softly, with a catch in his throat.)* She makes it seem so nice around here.

KATE. *(Shaking her finger at him.)* Look what happened to you because you wouldn't listen to me! I told you to marry that girl and stay out of the war!

GEORGE. *(Laughs at himself.)* She used to laugh too much.

KATE. And you didn't laugh enough. While you were getting mad about Fascism, Frank was getting into her bed.

GEORGE. *(To Chris.)* He won the war, Frank.

CHRIS. All the battles.

KATE. *(In pursuit of this mood.)* The day they started the draft, Georgie, I told you you loved that girl.

CHRIS. *(Laughs.)* And truer love hath no man!

KATE. I'm smarter than any of you.

GEORGE. *(Laughing.)* She's wonderful!

KATE. And now you're going to listen to me, George. You had big

principles, Eagle Scouts the three of you; so now I got a tree, and this one (*Indicating Chris.*), when the weather gets bad he can't stand on his feet; and that big dope (*Pointing to Lydia's house.*) next door who never reads anything but Andy Gump has three children and his house paid off. Stop being a philosopher, and look after yourself. Like Joe was just saying—you move back here, he'll help you get set, and I'll find you a girl and put a smile on your face.

GEORGE. Joe? Joe wants me here?

ANN. (*Eagerly.*) He asked me to tell you, and I think it's a good idea.

KATE. Certainly. Why must you make believe you hate us? Is that another principle?—that you have to hate us? You don't hate us, George, I know you, you can't fool me, I diapered you. (*Suddenly to Ann.*) You remember Mr. Marcy's daughter?

ANN. (*Laughing, to George.*) She's got you hooked already! (*George laughs, is excited.*)

KATE. You look her over, George; you'll see she's the most beautiful...

CHRIS. She's got warts, George.

KATE. (*To Chris.*) She hasn't got warts! (*To George.*) So the girl has a little beauty mark on her chin...

CHRIS. And two on her nose.

KATE. You remember. Her father's the retired police inspector.

CHRIS. Sergeant, George.

KATE. He's a very kind man!

CHRIS. He looks like a gorilla.

KATE. (*To George.*) He never shot anybody. (*They all burst out laughing, as Keller appears in doorway. George rises abruptly, stares at Keller, who comes rapidly down to him. The laughter stops.*)

KELLER. (*With strained joviality.*) Well! Look who's here! (*Extending his hand.*) Georgie, good to see ya.

GEORGE. (*Shakes hands—somerberly.*) How're you, Joe?

KELLER. So-so. Gettin' old. You comin' out to dinner with us?

GEORGE. No, got to be back in New York.

ANN. I'll call a cab for you. (*She goes up into the house.*)

(To George)

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KELLER. ↑ Sure, you'll have dinner with us!

ANN. How about it? Why not? We're eating at the lake, we could have a swell time.

GEORGE. *(Long pause, as he looks at Ann, Chris, Keller, then back to her.)* All right.

KATE. Now you're talking.

CHRIS. I've got a shirt that'll go right with that suit.

KATE. Size fifteen and a half, right, George?

GEORGE. Is Lydia...? I mean—Frank and Lydia coming?

KATE. I'll get you a date that'll make her look like a... *(She starts upstage.)*

GEORGE. *(Laughs.)* No, I don't want a date.

CHRIS. I know somebody just for you! Charlotte Tanner! *(He starts for the house.)*

KELLER. Call Charlotte, that's right.

KATE. Sure, call her up. *(Chris goes into house.)*

ANN. You go up and pick out a shirt and tie.

GEORGE. *(Stops, looks around at them and the place.)* I never felt at home anywhere but here. I feel so... *(He nearly laughs, and turns away from them.)* Kate, you look so young, you know? You didn't change at all. It...rings an old bell. *(Turns to Keller.)* You too, Joe, you're amazingly the same. The whole atmosphere is.

KELLER. Say, I ain't got time to get sick.

KATE. He hasn't been laid up in fifteen years...

KELLER. Except my flu during the war.


KATE. Huhh?

KELLER. My flu, when I was sick during...the war.

KATE. Well, sure... (To George.) I meant except for that flu. *(George stands perfectly still.)* Well, it slipped my mind, don't look at me that way. He wanted to go to the shop but he couldn't lift himself off the bed. I thought he had pneumonia.

GEORGE. Why did you say he's never...?

KELLER. I know how you feel, kid, I'll never forgive myself. If I

could've gone in that day I'd never allow Dad to touch those heads. 

GEORGE. She said you've never been sick.

KATE. I said he was sick, George.

GEORGE. (*Going to Ann.*) Ann, didn't you hear her say...?

KATE. Do you remember every time you were sick?

GEORGE. I'd remember pneumonia. Especially if I got it just the day my partner was going to patch up cylinder heads... What happened that day, Joe?

(*Frank enters briskly from driveway, holding Larry's horoscope in his hand. He comes to Kate.*)

FRANK. Kate! Kate!

KATE. Frank, did you see George?

FRANK. (*Extending his hand.*) Lydia told me, I'm glad to...you'll have to pardon me. (*Pulling Mother over R.*) I've got something amazing for you, Kate, I finished Larry's horoscope.

KATE. You'd be interested in this, George. It's wonderful the way he can understand the...

CHRIS. (*Entering from house.*) George, the girl's on the phone...

KATE. (*Desperately.*) He finished Larry's horoscope!

CHRIS. Frank, can't you pick a better time than this?

FRANK. The greatest men who ever lived believed in the stars!

CHRIS. Stop filling her head with that junk!

FRANK. Is it junk to feel that there's a greater power than ourselves? I've studied the stars of his life! I won't argue with you, I'm telling you. Somewhere in this world your brother is alive!

KATE. (*Instantly to Chris.*) Why isn't it possible?

CHRIS. Because it's insane.

FRANK. Just a minute now. I'll tell you something and you can do as you please. Just let me say it. He was supposed to have died on November 25th. But November 25th was his favorable day.

CHRIS. Mother!

KATE. Listen to him!

FRANK. It was a day when everything good was shining on him,

the kind of day he should've married on. You can laugh at a lot of it, I can understand you laughing. But the odds are a million to one that a man won't die on his favorable day. That's known, that's known, Chris!

KATE. Why isn't it possible, why isn't it possible, Chris!

GEORGE. *(To Ann.)* Don't you understand what she's saying? She just told you to go. What are you waiting for now?

CHRIS. Nobody can tell her to go. *(A car horn is heard.)*

KATE. *(To Frank.)* Thank you, darling, for your trouble. Will you tell him to wait, Frank?

FRANK. *(As he goes.)* Sure thing.

KATE. *(Calling out.)* They'll be right out, driver!

CHRIS. She's not leaving, Mother.

GEORGE. You heard her say it, he's never been sick!

KATE. He misunderstood me, Chris! *(Chris looks at her, struck.)*

GEORGE. *(To Ann.)* He simply told your father to kill pilots, and covered himself in bed!

CHRIS. You'd better answer him, Annie. Answer him.

KATE. I packed your bag, darling...

CHRIS. What?

KATE. I packed your bag. All you've got to do is close it.

ANN. I'm not closing anything. He asked me here and I'm staying till he tells me to go. *(To George.)* Till Chris tells me!

CHRIS. That's all! Now get out of here, George!

KATE. *(To Chris.)* But if that's how he feels...

CHRIS. That's all, nothing more till Christ comes, about the case or Larry as long as I'm here! *(To Ann.)* Now get out of here, George!

GEORGE. *(To Ann.)* You tell me. I want to hear you tell me.

ANN. Go, George!

(They disappear up the driveway, Ann saying "Don't take it that way, Georgie! Please don't take it that way." Chris turns to his mother.)

CHRIS. What do you mean, you packed her bag? How dare you pack her bag?